

63 Federal Plants Bombed Since 1970; 1,620 Threats

By Ken Ringle

Washington Post Staff Writer

It was a little more than 14 months ago, on March 1, 1971, that a bomb shattered a marble-lined men's room on the ground floor of the U.S. Capitol.

Until yesterday, that had been the most symbolic bombing attack yet on the federal government, apparently by antiwar radicals, but it was far from being the only one.

The General Services Administration, which owns or leases 10,000 buildings across the nation, says there have been 62 federal buildings bombed since Jan. 1, 1970. The Pentagon blast was No. 63. In that same period, 1,620 federal buildings have been threatened with bombings.

A GSA spokesman placed the cost of the bombings at \$829,400, "not counting thousands and thousands of dollars for evacuating buildings when we get a bomb threat."

The attacks on public buildings are only a part of a much wider incidence of bombings that appears in the statistics of American crime. In the first four months of 1972, according to FBI figures, there were 607 bombings in the United States and its territories at a cost of 10 lives, 56 injuries and uncounted thousands of dollars damage.

Many of the targets have been personal, and some have been targets of the political right, like the buses used to carry out court-ordered school desegregation in Pontiac, Mich.

A spokesman at the National Bomb Data Center here estimates that "53 per cent of the bombings have some sort of political motivation—right wing or left."

Some institutions, particularly on the West Coast, are recurring targets: A Bank of America branch in Ben Lomand, Calif., was bombed 62 times between Jan. 1 and July 31, 1971.

The Capitol and Pentagon bombings have followed a pattern set by one of the earliest of the apparent New Left bombings—the destruction of a six-story, \$6 million Army Math Research Center at the University of Wisconsin on Aug. 24, 1970.

The blast, which also killed a graduate student, was preceded by a telephone alert and was followed by claims from radical groups of responsibility for the incident.

The groups have identified themselves in letters after similar bombings under such names as "The Proud Eagle Tribe," "The Quarter Moon Tribe," or—in the case of an

Oct. 8, 1970, bombing of a National Guard Armory in Santa Barbara, Calif.—"The Perfect Park Home Grown Garden Society."

Virtually all have claimed kinship under the umbrella of the Weathermen—the violent splinter group of the Students for a Democratic Society.

In October, 1970, the Weathermen unleashed a "fall offensive" of bombings around the nation, after which the GSA tightened security at all federal buildings across the nation. GSA protects almost all federal buildings—including the FBI building.

Richard Vayter, director of information for GSA, said yesterday the tightening of security included closing off most entrances to government buildings except for those that were guarded.

In 1970, he said, most agencies did not have identification systems for their own personnel, and guards were instructed to inspect all packages.

Once the identification systems were devised, he said, guards were instructed to inspect packages only for those people without identification cards.

Recently, he said, even that restriction has been dropped, and guards were instructed to inspect only "suspicious packages," or those carried by suspicious persons. He added that the protection offered by any inspection system is "mostly psychological."

Modern explosives are so sophisticated, he said, they can be rolled out like a sheet of paper or fitted around a person's body and never detected by a guard.